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enabled to present on its first appearance. Whilst I thus express my obligation for favours received, I must not omit to solicit others. On this point, then, I will briefly premise, that all communications, calculated to promote the objects of this undertaking, will be accepted with pride, and acknowledged with gratitude.

Of the typographical execution of the work I may speak less reservedly, as I may speak without incurring the imputation of egotism. I hope, then, it will be found, that, in this respect, the CAMBRO-BRITON needs not shrink from a competition with any similar publication. A new type has been cast for the occasion; and all possible care will be taken to preserve, in the exterior appearance of the several numbers, a general regularity both of form and arrangement, so that, at the expiration of every twelve months, (if it be not too much presumption to indulge such a prospect) they may be united in one neat and uniform volume. For this purpose a general index and title-page will accompany every twelfth number of the work, as long as it may continue to merit the support of the public.

All that now remains is to take leave of my readers for the present as far as I am personally concerned. And, if I cannot do this with a full confidence in the success of my efforts to gratify them, it is not entirely without hope. I should not have hazarded the undertaking, if I had not, to a certain extent, indulged this cheering anticipation. Although I cannot now presume, therefore, to say, with the old Roman actors, *VOS VALETE ET PLAUDITE*, it shall be my invariable study so to conduct the CAMBRO-BRITON, as to be justified, to whatever degree, in adopting this valediction hereafter.

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THE EDITOR.

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### THE TRIADS.—No. I.

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OF all the ancient documents of Wales, the Triads, so peculiarly national, must be admitted to be the most deserving of our attention. And those, which are called Historical, or "Triads of the Isle of Britain," are particularly valuable, as well from their unquestionable antiquity, as from the interesting events, to which they relate. The peculiarity of their construction, ignorantly assumed by some as a ground of objection, is amongst the most satisfactory proofs of the venerable authenticity of their origin. Their very defects too, such as the want of dates and connection, bear ample testimony to the early ages, which gave them birth.

And, if to these be added the obscurity, or, it may be said, total inexplicability of the terms, used in some of them, little doubt can remain as to the remoteness of the era, to which they may generally be ascribed. Nor will it weaken this conclusion to observe, that in many of them, as noticed by a learned and ingenious writer\*, are contained doctrines totally at variance with our divine religion, and which accordingly appropriate such to a period at least antecedent to the establishment of Christianity in this island.

From this general allusion to the authentic character of the antient Triads, it may be worth our while to turn to a more particular, though to a brief, examination of their acknowleged origin. It is then to the Bardic or Druidical Institution, as it primitively existed in this country, that we must assign their first introduction. The encouragement of oral tradition, whether by songs or aphorisms, formed a principal characteristic of that celebrated order. It was in this manner, that they recorded the most memorable events of their country; and so it was, that they preserved for after-times their own rules and doctrines†. Poetry had thus for ages anticipated the functions of History; and in the Triads were embodied whatever might not admit of diffusion in the strains of the bard. These unwritten records again, being regularly recited at the bardic assemblies, were maintained for centuries in their original, or very nearly their original, purity. The art of memory was thus reduced to a practical system, and it can not be denied, that the form of the triad was most happily chosen for the purpose. Its conciseness, its simplicity, its general uniformity at once point out its advantages as the vehicle of traditional knowlege. And it deserves also to be remembered, that the number THREE has, from the earliest times, been held in peculiar veneration, and, it may have been, on this very account,—or, as has been justly observed, because it forms “a kind of limit to the natural power “of repeated exertion, an idea so far at least founded in nature “as to have become a favourite with the poets of all ages.” The Sect of Pythagoreans, in particular, with whom the Druids are presumed by some to have borne a resemblance in more points than this, regarded the triad as the first perfect number,

\* The late Rev. Peter Roberts, in his “Sketch of the Early History of the Cymry.”

† Cæsar bears particular testimony to this practice, and ascribes it, with his usual sagacity, to the proper cause,—“neque eos, qui discant, “litteris confisos, minus memoria studere.” BELL. GALL. lib. 6. c. 14.

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and gave this as a reason for their triple libations, as well as for the tripod, from which were delivered the Oracles of Apollo.

The Triads, thus originating, continued to be in use during a long succession of ages, until the extinction of Bardism; varying therefore in their antiquity from the most distant times down to those which are commonly called historical, and even so far as the twelfth century. And that many of these were ever regarded of the first authority is evident from the respect, with which they are noticed by the most antient Welsh Bards, whose writings still survive, and especially by Taliesin, who wrote in the sixth century. Such, as have descended to this time, are preserved in some of our oldest MSS., and were, some of them, thus collected, it is supposed, as early as the seventh century \*. Although, all that now remain must have borne but a small proportion with those once in existence, "their number is sufficient" (to adopt the words of the estimable author already twice quoted) "to determine some essential circumstances as to the origin and "history of the nation, and the real doctrines of the Bards. "And it is so far a pleasing reflection, that a discovery is made "of authorities, that point out an origin in conformity with a "general opinion, built upon the systems and ideas of the historians of other nations, without a knowlege of such records "being possessed by the nation itself †."

These interesting remains may be classed under the various heads of history,—bardism,—theology,—ethics and jurisprudence,—exclusively of those, that relate, in a more especial manner, to language and poetry. Of the historical some are purely so, and others evidently blended with fable, yet, even in this view, conveying much curious tradition. It will be the object of this portion of the CAMBRO-BRITON to supply translations of the Triads with reference to the classes above enumerated. The space, occupied by the foregoing observations, will not allow a selection, at present, of more than the following, which are extracted from the historical and ethical Triads. The originals may be found in the second and third volumes of that valuable repository of Welsh learning, the "ARCHAIOLOGY OF WALES." \*\*

\* This is stated in E. Llwyd's *Archæologia Britannica*, p. 264, as the opinion of that celebrated antiquary Mr. Vaughan, of Hengwrt. But it should be observed that the testimony of the old copyists of the Welsh MSS. does not go higher than the 10th century. The antient Triads however were principally collected during the 12th, 13th, and 14th centuries.

† "Early History of the Cymry."

## TRIADS OF THE ISLE OF BRITAIN.

I. THERE were three names imposed on the isle of Britain from the beginning. Before it was inhabited its denomination was the Sea-defended Green Spot; after being inhabited it was called the Honey Island, and after it was formed into a commonwealth by Prydain, the son of Aedd Mawr, it was called the Isle of Prydain. And none have any title therein but the nation of the Cymry. For they first settled upon it; and before that time no men lived therein, but it was full of bears, wolves, beavers, and bisons.

[In the original the names, translated *beavers* and *bisons*, are *Efeinc* and *Ychain banaug*. The description, given of the first in the Mabinogion and the Poets, answers to the crocodile and not to the beaver. The literal meaning of the other term is *prominent oxen*, but whether, from their having high horns or hunches, like the buffalo, or from their great height of body, it does not appear certain; most probably the first. A better opportunity will occur for speaking of these animals in connection with an antient and extraordinary tradition of the Cymry, as recorded in the Triads.]

II. The three primary divisions of the isle of Britain: Cymru, Lloegr, and Alban, or Wales, England, and Scotland; and to each of the three appertained the privilege of royalty. They are governed under a monarchy and voice of country, according to the regulation of Prydain, the son of Aedd Mawr; and to the nation of the Cymry belongs the establishing of the monarchy, by the voice of country and people, according to privilege and original right. And under the protection of such regulation ought royalty to be in every nation in the isle of Britain, and every royalty under the protection of the voice of country. Therefore it is said, as a proverb, “A country is mightier than a prince.”

III. The three privileged ports of the isle of Britain: the port of Ysgewin, in Gwent; the port of Gwygyr, in Môn; and the port of Gwyddno, in Caredigion.

[The present Newport, on the Uske, in Monmouthshire, was probably the first of these, and Beaumaris the second. The sea has overflowed the other, and formed the present Cardigan bay, where extensive remains of embankments are discernible, which protected a fine tract of level country, the territory of Gwyddno Garanhir, called Cantrev y Gwaelod, overflowed in the sixth century. A poem, ascribed to Gwyddno, on this disastrous event is preserved in the Archaiology of Wales, vol. i. p. 165.]

iv. The three principal rivers of the isle of Britain: Havren, in Cymru, [the Severn, in Wales;] Tain, in Lloegr, [the Thames, in England;] and Hymyr, in Deivr and Brynaich, [the Humber, in Deira and Bernicia, comprising the six northern English counties.]

v. The three primary islands lying off the isle of Britain: Orc, Manaw, and Gwyth, or Orkney, Man, and Wight; and afterwards the sea broke the land, so that Anglesey (Môn) became an island; and in like manner the isle of Orc was broken, so that many islands were formed there, and other parts of Wales and Scotland became islands.

[Nennius, in his "Historia Brittonum," written in the eighth or ninth century, confirms the account given in this Triad. "Three considerable islands," he says, "belong to Britain: one on the south, opposite the Armorican shore, called Guerth; another between Ireland and Britain, called Eubonia, or Manau; and another directly north, beyond the Picts, named Orch. And hence it was antiently a proverbial expression in reference to its kings and rulers,—' He reigned over Britain and its three islands'."]

#### TRIADS OF WISDOM.

i. There are three branches of wisdom: wisdom towards God, wisdom with respect to every fellow man, and wisdom with respect to one's self.

ii. The three recognitions which produce wisdom: the knowlege of God, the knowlege of the heart of man, and the knowlege of one's own heart.

iii. The three indispensables of wisdom: genius, science, and discrimination.

iv. The three stabilities of wisdom: what is right, beautiful, and possible.

v. Three things will be obtained by wisdom: the good (things) of the world, mental comfort, and the love of God.

vi. In three things wisdom is apparent: genius, science, and demeanour.

vii. The three exertions of wisdom: to understand nature by genius, to perceive truth by studying it, and to cultivate love and peace.

viii. Three things in a man that make him wise and good: qualities, science, and power.

ix. Three things with which wisdom can not exist: inordinate desire, debauchery, and pride.

x. Three things without which there can be no wisdom: generosity, abstinence, and virtue.